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SUBJECT: USUN TALKING POINTS FOR MINURCAT CONSULTATIONS

¶1. This is an action request. USUN may draw from the points in paragraph 2 during a briefing before the Security Council on the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) scheduled for February 17, 2010.

¶2. Begin points:

--I would like to thank U/SYG Le Roy and U/SYG Holmes for their briefing today on the consequences of terminating the mission when its mandate expires. We appreciate the difficult constraints within which MINURCAT has been forced to operate due to the Government of Chad's (GOC) request for termination of the mission. We are particularly concerned about the negative humanitarian consequences of an early withdrawal. We also note that such an early withdrawal could set a precedent for other withdrawing peacekeeping missions prematurely. A sudden withdrawal is in no one's interests. We believe the Council should send a strong message to Chadian President Deby that he should reconsider his decision, and he should negotiate with the United Nations to find a mutually beneficial way for MINURCAT to continue its mission. Today, I would like to make three points: first, MINURCAT's presence has made a difference; second, regional instability in the next twelve months may increase, thus arguing in favor of maintaining MINURCAT's presence; and third, the Council must carefully consider how it responds to President Deby's request.

MINURCAT'S Accomplishments

--MINURCAT was established to help create security conditions conducive to a voluntary, sustainable return of refugees and displaced persons, and to facilitate delivery of humanitarian assistance to the nearly 600,000 refugees and internally displaced persons in camps along the Chad/Sudan border.

--MINURCAT has contributed to improved security in IDP and refugee camps through its development and training of the Chadian Detachment Integre Securite (DIS).

--We are concerned that without continued training and support by the UN, the DIS may not remain a viable security force. At a minimum, any discussion of MINURCAT's withdrawal must factor in the Government of Chad's willingness to take on funding of the DIS, including the development of infrastructure needed for DIS facilities.

--Similarly, absent MINURCAT or a viable DIS, any discussion of withdrawal must acknowledge the security vacuum that would result, as well as diminished protection for IDPs and refugees.

Regional Stability

--We must consider the impact on regional stability of a MINURCAT withdrawal. Such a withdrawal would likely result in diminished protection of civilians, including IDPs and refugees, at a time when demand for this protection and the need for humanitarian services will likely increase.

--In neighboring Sudan, as April elections and the January 2011 referenda approach, there is the possibility of increased violence and instability, particularly in Darfur. Increased conflict in Darfur could result in additional refugee flows into eastern Chad. Both Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR) are also scheduled to hold elections this year - CAR in April and Chad in November.

--Growing instability in northeastern CAR resulted in increased flows of refugees from CAR into southern Chad earlier this year, and the security situation remains unstable. Additionally, although Chad and Sudan signed a peace agreement normalizing relations on January 15, the two parties have previously signed agreements that were quickly broken. The Chad/Sudan border remains volatile.

--All of these factors argue in favor of maintaining MINURCAT's presence in eastern Chad and northeastern CAR.

Maintaining Council Credibility

--We can all agree that for MINURCAT to be successful, cooperation from the Government of Chad is needed. It is apparent that a break-down in communication between the Council and the GOC led to the precipitous decision of the GOC to call for MINURCAT's withdrawal. The important point now is how the Council moves forward to address this matter.

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--We believe better communication between the Government of Chad and the UN can result in a win-win situation. We have urged President Deby to engage positively in negotiations for MINURCAT's continuation. We believe the guiding principle for withdrawal in these negotiations should be an approach based on benchmarks and not on a calendar based timeline. Draw down of MINURCAT troops should be based on the extent to which the GOC can provide adequate protection to refugees and internally displaced persons.

--The GOC may argue that it is currently capable of providing this protection; however, the Council mandated this peacekeeping mission, and we must decide if we are convinced the GOC can now assume these responsibilities. We must also ensure that we communicate to the GOC what the potential consequences of failing to do so might be.

Thank you.
CLINTON